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ABSTRACT

National statistics show a rise in the number of beginning teachers undergoing formal induction in their first year of teaching. This report discusses the effectiveness of induction programs and resulting outcomes for beginning teacher retention, beginning teacher effectiveness, and mentor participation. The various components of induction programs are provided, with in-depth discussion of: the role of the mentor; characteristics of effective mentorship and of successful induction programs; release time; and program evaluation and assessment. Included are aspects of induction programs that administrators, mentors, and inductees identify as essential to a program's success. Indicators of increased teacher effectiveness as they resulted from programs in California, Idaho, Montana, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Toronto, Canada, are detailed. Statistics showing high retention rates for inducted teachers are given for Texas, California, Montana, and Wisconsin. (Contains 29 references.) (Author/SM)

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# Beginning Teacher Induction: A Report on Beginning Teacher Effectiveness and Retention

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# Beginning Teacher Induction:
# A Report on Beginning Teacher Effectiveness and Retention

**Authors: Zewelanji Serpell and Leslie A. Bozeman**

## Abstract

National statistics show a rise in the number of beginning teachers undergoing formal induction in their first year of teaching. This report discusses the effectiveness of induction programs and resulting outcomes for beginning teacher retention, beginning teacher effectiveness and mentor participation. The various components of induction programs are provided with in-depth discussion of the role of the mentor, characteristics of effective mentorship and of successful induction programs, release time, and program evaluation and assessment. Included are aspects of induction programs that administrators, mentors and inductees identify as essential to a program's success. Indicators of increased teacher effectiveness as they resulted from programs in California, Idaho, Montana, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Toronto, Canada are detailed. Statistics showing high retention rates for inducted teachers

are given for Texas, California, Montana, and Wisconsin.

## Introduction

In the last two decades, researchers, policy makers and educators have become increasingly interested in the experiences of beginning teachers and the use of induction as a way of introducing them to the teaching profession. While the concept of induction has evolved and changed over the last few years, it is still understood as a helping mechanism for beginning teachers. More concretely, it is a formal program of systematic and sustained assistance provided to beginning teachers by professionals specifically assigned that responsibility.

The implementation and evaluation of induction programs in the United States has expanded extensively and experience with induction is an increasing trend for beginning teachers. National statistics show a significant rise in the number of beginning teachers experiencing some sort of formal induction in their first year of teaching. A national survey in 1998 reports that 34% of full- time public school teachers had participated in an induction program when they first started teaching.[1] Darling-Hammond also reports that in 1997, 55% of teachers with less than 5 years experience underwent formal induction.

**Recruiting New Teachers (RNT)**
A non-profit organization that attracts new teachers, promotes teaching as a profession and conducts research on education policy and practice.

**Education Commission of the States (ECS)**
Helps state leaders develop and carry out policies that improve performance of the educational system.

The level of state involvement in induction is also on the rise. According to a recent study by Recruiting New Teachers (RNT), seven states have induction mandates with funding, 10 states have a mandate without funding and 10 states have funding but no mandate. The Education Commission of the States (ECS) National Clearinghouse reports from the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) 1998- 1999 survey of 42 states, that 39 states have mentoring programs and two

states have policies regarding mentoring. Robinson (1998) reports that in 1996, 28 states had mentoring programs for beginning teachers and that 14 states have mandated and at least partially funded new teacher induction or mentoring. Furthermore, 17 states have incorporated some, if not all, of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education's (NCATE) recommendations of educational standards that include a stipulation that provisions be made for beginning teachers. The four most cited induction models are mentoring, fifth- year, alternative certification and professional development.[2] The lines of demarcation among these models are blurred and programs can be differentiated on many levels; including the origin of their resources, the institutions involved in their design and implementation and their structures. The length of programs also varies, but those that are not connected to certification are generally one year[3]. This may change as induction is increasingly regarded as a part of a teacher's developmental process. In the future induction programs are likely to be two to three years long [4]. Despite the differences between programs, they generally share similar visions with respect to beginning teachers.

Research in the 80s spawned many pilot induction projects, and data regarding their perceived effectiveness in ameliorating beginning teacher difficulties. Although the literature shows that there continues to be a close connection between research on beginning teachers and induction programs, the highlighting of beginning teacher difficulties and experiences has been replaced with more practical attempts to define effective solutions and help mechanisms.

Induction is being understood in far broader terms and research has over the last decade been increasingly used to inform contemporary program designs. Program descriptions are more detailed and the research of program effectiveness has become more prevalent (though not necessarily more rigorous). Much of the research on induction is in the form of case studies or relies heavily on questionnaire data.



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The precedent for beginning teacher induction has been firmly established, but the need for more evaluative research remains evident. Although beginning teachers consistently report that they benefit psychologically from the induction experience, how their psychological well-being in their first year translates into their retention in later years or into effective teaching practices remains unclear and relatively unexamined. This report highlights what appear to be the most essential elements of induction programs to date, and attempts to outline the findings of research documenting the impact of induction programs on beginning teacher effectiveness and retention.

## Induction Program Components

**Orientation**
- Curriculum training and effective teaching practices
- Opportunity to observe and be observed
- Assignment of a mentor

**Preparation**
- General orientation to the school
- Disbursement of materials regarding technicalities of school functioning

Program components are often conceptualized as steps or stages, such that the program is seen as first *preparing*, then *orienting* and finally *aiding* actual practice. The summer orientation typically lasts anywhere from a couple of hours to a full week. The other components are understood as on-going throughout the teacher's first or first two years of teaching. Differences among programs are best understood in terms of where emphasis is placed and the relative importance assigned to each component. Of the components, mentoring and release time have been identified as the most critical.

**Practice**
- Continuing interaction and exchange with an assigned mentor
- Released time or reduced work load
- In-service programming

Mentoring is defined as the process through which beginning teachers become more proficient in their profession as a result of structured and planned experiences with a veteran teacher. Despite a lack of consensus about the utility and format, mentoring is identified by researchers as the most critical component of induction programs and by teachers as the most helpful.

Release time involves a reduced work load for mentor and mentee teachers. This time is often allocated to discuss practical issues, observe one another's teaching practices or attend in-service

programs.

## Characteristics of Successful Induction Programs[5]

Administrators, mentors and inductees alike have identified components of induction programs that are beneficial to all participants. The following are identified as essential for success:

- A coherent structure with well designed activities that train beginning teachers on curriculum, effective teaching practice and behavior management issues
- A formal and structured mentoring component that focuses on improving practice, provides mentors with training and compensates mentors
- Release time or reduced teaching loads for beginning teachers and mentors, that sufficiently provides opportunities for beginning teachers to observe and be observed
- A means of formative assessment that emphasizes the assistance of beginning teachers on a continuum of professional growth
- Sufficient and on-going fiscal resources and political support to sustain the program

## Characteristics of Effective Mentorship

Research continues to confirm that mentor programs are perceived by their participants as valuable, the most effective mentoring programs do the following:

- focus on improving practice
- provide mentors with training
- reduce the work loads or give release time for beginning teachers and mentors
- compensate mentors with money, status, release time or graduate credit

The mentoring component is essential to many induction programs, but is not

helpful in and of itself. Instead, successful mentoring relationships are contingent on a number of factors including:

- provision for choice in mentors
- close proximity between mentors and their mentees
- matching of mentors and mentees on work experience, personality, grade level and subject areas

Overall the research reports that beginning teachers who have had a mentor in their first year of teaching feel more prepared and are more likely to be retained. Outcomes are still examined in terms of mentee satisfaction, with only a few exploring specifically how having a mentor impacts teacher practice. Schaffer et al's 1992 study is one example of an attempt to link mentorship to classroom practice and, Klug and Salzman (1991) have managed to establish that formal structured programs are better than informal ones.

## Evaluation and Assessment

**The Education Commission of the States (ECS)**

Report on mentoring/ induction programs in 42 states:

24 have an evaluation mechanism for the beginning teacher

16 explicitly have a means of evaluating the program

Although of great importance, assessment and evaluation of induction programs are not often addressed. The problem is whether standards of effectiveness can be established in the midst of differing contextual influences in schools. There is also considerable debate about whether induction should be used as a means of eliminating incompetent beginning teachers, given the fact that induction programs are by definition designed to assist not assess. Teacher evaluations take several forms, but most are formative and not summative.[6] Summative evaluation draws conclusions about the worth and value of a teacher's

performance. Whereas formative evaluation facilitates a teacher's ongoing development with non-judgmental performance feedback. [7] Formative assessment to some degree limits outcomes to self-reports from teachers regarding the impact of their induction experiences. Research has shown that formative assessment is far more common than summative assessment, which is historically tied to programs in which certification or job continuation is contingent upon performance.[8]

In reference to mentorship, evaluation and assessment has been of some debate and influences what role the mentor is expected to serve. There is little clarity in the literature concerning what aspect of a program should be evaluated, who the evaluator should be, who should be evaluated, and how this evaluation should be done. Even when the certification process is not part of the induction process, programs have to evaluate their effectiveness. Whether this evaluation simply asks opinions of beginning teachers or involves some formal evaluation of teachers' performance varies between programs. Mentors are not typically required to evaluate their mentees and although this type of assessment has been successfully integrated into some programs, researchers do not support this practice [9].

> *"Her praise and encouragement in daily tasks have bolstered my failing confidence. She was supportive and backed up my assessment of the situation* (Beginning Teacher in Toronto Peer Support Pilot Project) ."

> *"To confound the helping and assistance role of mentoring with the task of conducting formal evaluation of teaching performance is to undermine the very condition-trust-that is required for mentoring to flourish* (Neal, 1992)."

Studies have indicated that when the mentor plays a role in evaluation it may strain the mentor- mentee relationship. Yet, it has been shown that an evaluative component in mentorship can actually enhance both the mentor's and mentee's teaching practices and professional growth, as seems to be the case with the Peer Review and Assistance (PAR) programs.

The literature of the late 90s indicates increasing interest in the dynamics of mentor-mentee relationships. Where earlier studies dealt with mentor roles and responsibilities, recent research seeks to ascertain what mentors derive from the mentoring experience and what they deem important for beginning teachers. Closer

attention is also being paid to the benefits mentors derive from mentoring. Research reports that veteran teachers who serve as mentors demonstrate greater reflection and introspection about teaching, learn new ideas, gain a sense of renewal and satisfaction. Hence, mentorship experiences play a large part in the professional development of teachers who are well into their teaching careers.[10]

Surveys are the most commonly used means of evaluation in induction. California seems to have one of the more advanced assessment systems. The system assesses participant perceptions at all levels of the program and includes project director surveys examining the quality of implementation. This system also includes beginning teacher observations, individual growth plans and portfolios.

Despite the complicated history of the role of evaluation and assessment in induction programs and the elimination or modification of many performance measures, the increase in state participation in induction has encouraged a more focused and critical attempt at setting standards for evaluating teacher effectiveness. Furthermore, the lack of strong empirical data in this area of research has not affected the preponderance of mentoring programs and the strikingly large information base on mentoring that spans across a wide range of information mediums including the Internet.

## Induction Program Participation Outcomes

### Retention

**Wisconsin**

- 75% of participants indicated they planned to be teaching in 5 years as compared to 25% of non-participants
- 100% of induction program participants completed their first year of teaching as compared to 83% of non-participants

Induction programs are being developed and improved in an effort to continue the preparation of new teachers, but also to keep them teaching for years to come. Early research provided anecdotal evidence that higher retention among beginning teachers

is a positive outcome of induction. This evidence consisted of self-report data regarding attitude change as a result of induction. That is, teachers who participated in induction programs reported feeling better about their jobs and thought they would stay in the profession.

In contrast to earlier research, contemporary studies seek to ascertain whether beginning teachers do in fact stay in the profession and whether they are retained long term. These systematic efforts to demonstrate higher retention amongst beginning teachers who have undergone induction is a phenomenon of the mid-- to late 90s.

Studies have shown that new teachers are most likely to leave the profession within the first five years of teaching. However, research reveals that in many cases participation in induction programs increases the likelihood of beginning teachers

**Montana Beginning Teacher Support Program**

- 97% of mentored teachers were active in the profession one year after participating in the program as compared to 71.5% of non-mentored teachers
- 91.5% of the mentored teachers were still active after 2 years, compared to 73% of non-mentored teachers
- 91% of the mentor teachers were still active after 3 years (control group did not participate in this part of survey)

a cross section of mentoring programs across the United States reports that the programs in New Mexico, New York State (North Country Regional Consortium and East Harlem) Arizona and Colorado all show high retention rates amongst inducted beginning teachers [11]. Odell & Ferraro (1992) report that 96% of the beginning teachers who

**Texas**

**Texas A&M University- Corpus Christi's induction program**

1995: 94% of participants remain in the classroom, compared to the nationwide trend of 50% attrition


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participated in a university-school partnership induction program, remained

1993-94: 100% of participants stayed in the profession for 5 years, 48% finished a master's degree

1992-93: 94% of participants stayed for 5 years, 52% completed a master's degree

1991-92: 100% of participants stayed for 5 years, 67% completed a master's degree

**South West Texas State University Teacher Fellows Induction Program**

1995-96: 89% of new teachers retained after 3 years, 100% completed a master's degree

1996-97: 91% of new teachers retained after 2 years, 100% completed a master's

in the teaching profession three years after their first year. Recent statistics document that Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi's induction program and the Southwest Texas State University Fellows Program show significant increases in retention rates amongst inductees.

Along with other successes noted in the California system, research demonstrates that they too report higher retention rates amongst inducted beginning teachers.

California

- After 3-years 95% of participants in the California New Teacher Projects were still teaching

## Teaching Effectiveness and Other Positive Outcomes

With the growing number of teachers who have undergone formal induction, there is a focal shift in induction from a managerial perspective that helps beginning teachers cope, to a more pedagogical perspective concerned with fostering excellence amongst them. The attempts to establish the connection between induction and student performance using beginning teacher retention data rests on the premise that greater time in service leads to greater proficiency, and ultimately to higher student

achievement. [12]

The following are some examples of what have been investigated as indicators of increased teacher effectiveness brought about by participation in induction programs:

**California[13]: Teaching Techniques**

Compared to other new teachers, beginning teachers in the California New Teacher Pilot Project do the following more consistently than new teachers outside the program:

- used instructional practices that improve student achievement
- used more complex, challenging instructional activities that enable students to learn advanced thinking skills and cooperative work habits
- engaged in long-term planning of curriculum and instruction
- motivated diverse students to engage in productive learning activities
- gave the same complex, challenging assignments to classes of diverse pupils as they did to classes that were ethnically and culturally homogeneous

**Idaho: Comparative Effects and Outcomes of Formal Induction vs. Informal Mentoring[14]**

- 85% of new teachers experiencing difficulties with materials and resources, lesson presentations, planning for individual instruction, working with exceptional children and overall classroom management reported elimination of these problems throughout the year that they participated in the team approach induction program
- First and second year teachers participating in induction demonstrated more positive attitudes regardless of model in areas of rapport with the principal, curriculum issues, teacher status and community support and

pressures

**Montana: Teacher Progress and Success**[15]

- 34% of mentored teachers exceeded first- year teacher expectations
- Nine of the 24 mentored teachers in the study were well advanced for first- year expectations, nine of them were ahead of the expectations, six were average and none were below
- Administrators found that 14 of the 25 mentored teachers had more successes than normal, seven had an average amount, two had fewer successes than normal
- 95% of surveyed educators responded that beginning teacher progress towards expectations was faster because of mentoring
- 22 mentors were surveyed and all responded that the program had a positive effect on them, indicating rejuvenation of professional responsibilities

**North Carolina: Analyses of Classroom Interactions**[16]

- By the second year of a two- year induction program that concentrated on effective use of time, program participants were able to increase the time they spent on academic classroom instruction from 71% to 83%
- They were also able to keep time spent on behavior management to under 3% and time spent on classroom organization to 12%

**Toronto, Canada: The Teacher Peer Support Program**[17]

- New teachers participating in induction were more likely to seek assistance from principals and support staff than non-inducted new teachers

- Inducted teachers are more likely to improve time and classroom management skills and instructional strategies during their first year than are non-inducted teachers

- Inducted teachers required less emotional support than non-inducted new teachers

- Mentor teachers reported increased organization of own thoughts, widening of their perspective, more focused teaching strategies and professional rejuvenation from assisting new teachers

**Wisconsin: Teacher Satisfaction and Classroom Skills** [18]

- Mentor teachers improved their classroom skills through specific training and their enthusiasm positively affected other teachers not directly involved in the program.
- Participation in induction programs has contributed to beginning teachers' job satisfaction and attitudes about teaching.

- Assistance and support to beginning teachers can help resolve problems and concerns in such areas as classroom management skills and relationships with students.

- 100% of participants felt free to seek assistance from a mentor, principal or consultant, while non-participants felt they had no one to talk to.

- Administrators indicated fewer student referrals, parent calls and student complaints for program participants.

- Administrators indicated fewer problems with first- year teachers when they are working with the induction program.

## Summary and Conclusions

Research on induction programs has expanded since the 1980s, yet the need to fully examine the outcomes of induction for new and veteran teachers still exists.

Research shows that the extended preparation, emotional support and professional development that induction provides leads to proven positive outcomes for new teacher retention and new teacher effectiveness and that veteran teachers also reap benefits.

The longevity of teachers in the profession has important implications for student learning and school-wide success. Schools benefit from a solid base of returning teachers. Not only do they have more teachers versed in the schools' policies, educational philosophy and day to day functioning, but they also maintain a teaching staff with more teaching experience. Increased classroom experience yields greater comfort with students and a better sense of time management and classroom practice. Schools also benefit from the inclusion of veteran teachers as mentors in induction. Oftentimes teachers who have been in the profession for several years lose the enthusiasm and energy needed to be effective. However, as mentors, experienced teachers are able to give back to the teaching profession as they rise to the challenge of effectively and positively imparting their years of knowledge and practice to novices. Furthermore, by assisting new teachers, veteran teachers expand upon their teaching skills and develop new ones. Hence the school gains not only a body of more stimulated, effective, and experienced teachers, but also more capable new teachers.

State involvement is a deciding factor in the profile, extent and success of induction programs. Funding allocated to support induction is critical. Funding determines, among other things, whether experienced teachers will be compensated for their knowledge, effort and time. It affects whether new and veteran teachers will receive release time, and affects the length and breadth of the induction period. State mandates that support the type of structured and long-term orientation for new teachers that induction programs provide are also essential. That a state mandates an induction program shows a commitment to the success of new teachers and sets an example for how individual schools or districts should cultivate their new teachers.

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## Notes

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[2] Talbert & Camp, 1992

[3] Furtwengler, 1995

[4] Huling-Austin, 1999

[5] Arends, 1998; Danielson, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Furtwengler, 1995; Talbert, 1992

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